

*In 2016, Zimbabwe made a moderate advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The Government developed a Trafficking in Persons National Plan of Action, launched Phase III of the National Action Plan for Orphans and Vulnerable Children, and withdrew 178 children from child labor on plantations and sent them back to school. In addition, the Government operated a national case management system throughout 65 districts for child care workers to identify, report, and address child abuse cases, including child labor. However, children are engaged in the worst forms of child labor, including in commercial sexual exploitation and mining. Zimbabwe continues to lack specific social programs targeting sectors in which child labor is most prevalent. Gaps remain in the country's legal framework against child labor, such as lack of free basic education, which increases children's vulnerability.*



## I. PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Children in Zimbabwe engage in the worst forms of child labor, including in commercial sexual exploitation and mining.(1-4) Data on key indicators on children's work and education are not available from the sources used in this report.

**Table 1. Statistics on Children's Work and Education**

Children	Age	Percent
Working (% and population)	5 to 14	Unavailable
Attending School (%)	5 to 14	Unavailable
Combining Work and School (%)	7 to 14	Unavailable
Primary Completion Rate (%)		90.2

Source for primary completion rate: Data from 2013, published by UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2016.(5)

Data were unavailable from Understanding Children's Work Project's analysis, 2015.(6)

Based on a review of available information, Table 2 provides an overview of children's work by sector and activity.

**Table 2. Overview of Children's Work by Sector and Activity**

Sector/Industry	Activity
Agriculture	Production of tea, cotton, tobacco, corn, and sugarcane (2, 3, 7-11)
	Fishing, including casting nets, hauling fish loads, and sorting fish (2, 3, 7, 8, 11)
	Forestry, such as dragging logs from felling sites and loading logs for transport (2, 3, 10, 11)
	Cattle herding (2, 7, 11)
Industry	Mining gold and chrome, and extracting material from underground passages and quarries† (2-4, 7, 12)
Services	Street work, including vending and begging (2, 3, 8-10)
	Domestic work (2, 3, 8, 10, 11, 13, 14)
Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor‡	Use in illicit activities, including drug trafficking and gambling (3, 7)
	Commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking (2, 4, 7, 10, 11, 15, 16)
	Working in agriculture, mining for the production of gold and chrome, and domestic work, each as a result of human trafficking (4, 7, 15)

† Determined by national law or regulation as hazardous and, as such, relevant to Article 3(d) of ILO C. 182.

‡ Child labor understood as the worst forms of child labor *per se* under Article 3(a)-(c) of ILO C. 182.

Zimbabwean children are trafficked to South Africa, Mozambique, and Zambia, where they become victims of commercial sexual exploitation and forced labor in domestic work. Zimbabwean children, especially orphans, are sometimes lured by relatives with the promise of education or adoption, but instead are recruited to work within the country as domestic workers or forced to work in mining, drug smuggling, or other illegal activities.(4) The deterioration of Zimbabwe's economy

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and manufacturing sector has also led to a recent increase in child labor.(8) A source indicates that local women in the suburb of Epworth organize child prostitution syndicates.(11)

According to UNICEF, approximately 100,000 of Zimbabwe's 1.3 million orphans survive on their own in child-headed households.(17) The breakdown of the family unit and poverty are major factors in children's vulnerability to child labor.(7, 17, 18) Citizenship is derived from birth, but many children, especially orphans and children living in rural areas, are not registered due to poverty and lack of awareness of the requirements.(7, 16) Beginning in grade seven, children are unable to sit for exams without a birth registration, leading some to enter the workforce at a young age.(7, 19) School fees are often prohibitively expensive and limit access to education.(8, 18) According to the UN, children with disabilities, especially in rural areas, experience greater abuse, violence, stigma, and exclusion, and, therefore, have limited access to education.(16)

## II. LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOR

Zimbabwe has ratified all key international conventions concerning child labor (Table 3).

**Table 3. Ratification of International Conventions on Child Labor**

Convention	Ratification
 ILO C. 138, Minimum Age	✓
ILO C. 182, Worst Forms of Child Labor	✓
 UN CRC	✓
UN CRC Optional Protocol on Armed Conflict	✓
UN CRC Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography	✓
 Palermo Protocol on Trafficking in Persons	✓

The Government has established laws and regulations related to child labor, including its worst forms (Table 4). However, gaps exist in Zimbabwe's legal framework to adequately protect children from child labor.

**Table 4. Laws and Regulations on Child Labor**

Standard	Meets International Standards: Yes/No	Age	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work	Yes	16	Section 3 of the Labor Amendment Act (20)
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work	Yes	18	Section 11(4) of the Labor Act (20)
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children	Yes		Section 11(4) of the Labor Act; Section 10A of the Children's Act (20, 21)
Prohibition of Forced Labor	Yes		Sections 54 and 55 of the Constitution; Section 4A of the Labor Act (20, 22)
Prohibition of Child Trafficking	Yes		Section 3 of the Trafficking in Persons Act (23)
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children	Yes		Section 87 of the Criminal Law Act; Section 3 of the Sexual Offenses Act; Section 8(2) of the Children's Protection and Adoption Act; Section 3 of the Trafficking in Persons Act (7, 10, 21, 23, 24)
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities	Yes		Section 156 of the Criminal Law Act; Section 10 of the Children's Protection and Adoption Act (7)
Minimum Age for Military Recruitment			
State Compulsory	Yes	18	Section 9 of the National Service Act (25)
State Voluntary	Yes	16	Sections 5 and 10 of the National Service Act (25)
Non-state Compulsory	No		
Compulsory Education Age	Yes	12 <sup>‡</sup>	Section 5 of the Education Act (26)
Free Public Education	No		

‡ Age calculated based on available information (27)

Zimbabwean law does not mandate free basic education for children.(28) Lack of access to basic education may increase the risk of children's involvement in child labor.(7) In addition, children in Zimbabwe are required to attend school only up to age 12. This standard makes children ages 12 through 15 vulnerable to child labor because they are not required to attend school and not legally permitted to work.(27)

### III.ENFORCEMENT OF LAWS ON THE WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOR

The Government has established institutional mechanisms for the enforcement of laws and regulations on child labor, including its worst forms (Table 5). However, gaps in labor law and criminal law enforcement remain and some enforcement information is not available.

**Table 5. Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement**

Organization/Agency	Role
Ministry of Public Service, Labor, and Social Welfare (MPSLSW)	Enforce labor laws and investigate labor-related complaints, including complaints involving child labor. Established a Department for Child Welfare and Probation Services responsible for child protection services, including investigating, intervening in, and reporting on child abuse cases.(7, 10)
Zimbabwe Republic Police (ZRP)	Enforce laws related to the worst forms of child labor in conjunction with the MPSLSW and the Ministry of Justice and Home Affairs.(7) Address issues related to child labor through victim-friendly units in every district. Conduct transnational trafficking investigations through an anti-trafficking desk at Zimbabwe's INTERPOL office.(7)
Ministry of Justice and Legal Affairs	Oversee all courts, including labor courts. Address trafficking and child victim cases through victim-friendly courts.(7)

#### *Labor Law Enforcement*

In 2016, labor law enforcement agencies in Zimbabwe took actions to combat child labor, including its worst forms (Table 6).

**Table 6. Labor Law Enforcement Efforts Related to Child Labor**

Overview of Labor Law Enforcement	2015	2016
Labor Inspectorate Funding	Unknown* (2)	Unknown* (11)
Number of Labor Inspectors	Unknown* (2)	120 (11)
Number of Child Labor Dedicated Inspectors	Unknown* (2)	3 (11)
Inspectorate Authorized to Assess Penalties	Unknown* (2)	No (11)
Training for Labor Inspectors		
Initial Training for New Employees	Unknown* (2)	N/A (11)
Training on New Laws Related to Child Labor	Unknown* (2)	N/A (11)
Refresher Courses Provided	Yes (2)	Unknown* (11)
Number of Labor Inspections		
Number Conducted at Worksite	Unknown* (2)	866 (11)
Number Conducted by Desk Reviews	Unknown* (2)	Unknown (11)
Number of Child Labor Violations Found	Unknown* (2)	436 (11)
Number of Child Labor Violations for Which Penalties Were Imposed	Unknown* (2)	Unknown* (11)
Number of Penalties Imposed That Were Collected	Unknown* (2)	Unknown* (11)
Routine Inspections Conducted	Unknown* (2)	Yes (11)
Routine Inspections Targeted	Unknown* (2)	Yes (11)
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	Yes (2)	Yes (11)
Unannounced Inspections Conducted	Unknown* (2)	Yes (11)
Complaint Mechanism Exists	No (2)	Yes (11)
Reciprocal Referral Mechanism Exists Between Labor Authorities and Social Services	Yes (2)	Yes (11)

\*The Government does not publish this information.

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During the year, the Government disaggregated the number of child labor cases, including its worst forms. The Ministry of Public Service, Labor, and Social Welfare (MPSLSW) reported cases involving Zimbabwean children: 304 of child labor, 66 of child prostitution, and 6 of child trafficking.(11) According to the MPSLSW, 132 children were withdrawn from the worst forms of child labor and referred to social services.(11)

According to the ILO's recommendation of 1 inspector for every 15,000 workers in developing economies, Zimbabwe should employ roughly 540 labor inspectors.(29, 30) Research indicates that the Government continues to lack sufficient resources, mainly financial, to investigate child labor law violations.(2, 31)

### *Criminal Law Enforcement*

In 2016, criminal law enforcement agencies in Zimbabwe did not take actions to combat the worst forms of child labor (Table 7).

**Table 7. Criminal Law Enforcement Efforts Related to the Worst Forms of Child Labor**

Overview of Criminal Law Enforcement	2015	2016
Training for Investigators		
Initial Training for New Employees	Unknown* (2)	Unknown* (11)
Training on New Laws Related to the Worst Forms of Child Labor	Unknown* (2)	Unknown* (11)
Refresher Courses Provided	Unknown* (2)	Unknown* (11)
Number of Investigations	Unknown* (2)	Unknown* (11)
Number of Violations Found	Unknown* (2)	Unknown* (11)
Number of Prosecutions Initiated	Unknown* (2)	Unknown* (11)
Number of Convictions	Unknown* (2)	Unknown* (11)
Reciprocal Referral Mechanism Exists Between Criminal Authorities and Social Services	Unknown* (2)	Yes (11)

\*The Government does not publish this information.

## IV. COORDINATION OF GOVERNMENT EFFORTS ON THE WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOR

The Government has established mechanisms to coordinate its efforts to address child labor, including its worst forms (Table 8).

**Table 8. Key Mechanisms to Coordinate Government Efforts on Child Labor**

Coordinating Body	Role & Description
National Steering Committee to Address the Worst Forms of Child Labor	Address the worst forms of child labor. Chaired by the MPSLSW and includes several government ministries, including the ministries of Health and Child Care; Primary and Secondary Education; and Youth Development, Indigenization, and Empowerment.(32) Also includes international organizations and civil society groups, such as workers' and employers' organizations.(32, 33) The committee did not meet during the year.(11)
Ministry-Level Committee on Children's Issues	Coordinate government ministries' efforts related to children's issues, including child labor. Includes the MPSLSW and the ministries of Education; Women's Affairs; and Youth Development, Indigenization, and Empowerment.(7, 10, 32) The committee met during the year.
Child Protection Committees	Operate at the village, ward, district, provincial, and national levels to discuss issues affecting children, including child labor. Representatives include ministries, civil society, local volunteers, and teachers. Report to the Ministry-Level Committee on Children's Issues. The committees met regularly during the year.(11)
National Task Force on Street Children	Outline strategies to combat child labor, including feeding street children at drop-in centers, reuniting children with their families, and offering counseling sessions. Chaired by the MPSLSW and includes NGOs that work on street children's issues.(7, 32) Also includes the Ministry of Home Affairs, represented by the ZRP. The taskforce met twice during the year.(11)
Anti-Trafficking Inter-Ministerial Committee	Create a national action plan to combat human trafficking and promote the reintegration and rehabilitation of trafficking victims, including children.(2, 34) The Committee met during the year to discuss and develop strategies to address trafficking in persons. In 2016, developed and launched the Trafficking in Persons National Plan of Action.(11)

During the year, the MPSLSW oversaw a national case management system that is operational in all 65 districts for child care workers to identify, report, and address child abuse cases, including child labor.(11)

## V. GOVERNMENT POLICIES ON THE WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOR

The Government has established policies related to child labor, including its worst forms (Table 9).

**Table 9. Key Policies Related to Child Labor**

Policy	Description
National Action Plan to Combat Child Labor	Strengthens understanding about child labor issues and creates an entity to coordinate responses to the findings of this analysis. Consists of three focus areas: education assistance, poverty assistance through a cash transfer scheme, and health assistance.(7)
Trafficking in Persons National Plan of Action (2016–2018)	Aims to implement the UN Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons through the development of strategies to combat human trafficking, with emphasis on prevention, protection, prosecution, and partnership. The plan was developed with technical support from IOM, UNODC, and the Southern African Development Community, and officially launched in July 2016.(35)

Although the MPSLSW, in collaboration with the ILO, previously conducted a child labor rapid assessment that prompted the development of the National Action Plan to Combat Child Labor, the Government took no actions to operationalize the plan and did not use the results of the assessment to inform policies or programs.(2)

## VI. SOCIAL PROGRAMS TO ADDRESS CHILD LABOR

In 2016, the Government funded and participated in programs that may contribute to the prevention or elimination of child labor (Table 10).

**Table 10. Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor**

Program	Description
Phase III of the National Action Plan for Orphans and Vulnerable Children (NAP OVC III) (2016–2020)	UNICEF Child Protection Fund program that includes a focus on equity and access to quality education for children and provides child protection services. Provides a cash transfer program that encourages families to keep children in school.(36) During the year, cash transfers reached at least 52,000 poor households in 19 districts, and provided child protection and welfare services to 35,460 children in 37 districts.(11)
Stop Child Labor Program	Hivos-funded program that establishes child labor-free zones throughout the country. The program includes the Ministry of Labor, Coalition Against Child Labor in Zimbabwe, African Network for the Prevention and Protection Against Child Abuse and Neglect, Progressive Teachers Union of Zimbabwe, Zimbabwe Teachers' Association, and the General Agriculture and Plantation Workers Union.(11) Teachers, labor inspectors, police officers, and other stakeholders support this initiative by sending child laborers back to school.(37) During the year, the program developed a social responsibility project to address child labor in plantations, resulting in 178 children being withdrawn from child labor and sent back to school.(11)
Basic Education Assistance Module†	Government program, supported by the UK Department for International Development, that provides basic financial assistance to families for education costs, such as tuition and examination fees. Aims to keep children in school and to enroll children who lack access to school as a result of economic hardship.(38)

† Program is funded by the Government of Zimbabwe.

The Zimbabwe Youth Council, in collaboration with UNICEF, developed an online platform for sharing and educating the public about harmful social practices that affect children.(39) Although Zimbabwe has programs that target child labor, the scope of these programs is insufficient to fully address the extent of the problem.

## VII. SUGGESTED GOVERNMENT ACTIONS TO ELIMINATE THE WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOR

Based on the reporting above, suggested actions are identified that would advance the elimination of child labor, including its worst forms, in Zimbabwe (Table 11).

**Table 11. Suggested Government Actions to Eliminate Child Labor, Including its Worst Forms**

Area	Suggested Action	Year(s) Suggested
Legal Framework	Ensure that the law criminally prohibits the recruitment of children under 18 by non-state armed groups.	2016
	Ensure that the age up to which education is compulsory is the same as the minimum age for work.	2016
	Ensure that the law establishes free basic education for children through age 15.	2009 – 2016
Enforcement	Increase the number of labor law inspectors to provide sufficient coverage of the workforce to meet the ILO recommendation.	2016
	Ensure adequate funding, human resources, and training for the labor inspectorate to conduct child labor inspections.	2009 – 2016
	Publish information about the labor inspectorate's funding, training, and the penalties collected.	2016
	Publish information about the training system for criminal investigators, the number of criminal investigations, the number of prosecutions initiated, and the number of convictions achieved.	2015 – 2016
Coordination	Ensure that the National Steering Committee meets regularly to address the worst forms of child labor.	2016
Government Policies	Implement the National Action Plan to Combat Child Labor.	2010 – 2016
Social Programs	Ensure that children are registered at birth to facilitate their entrance into secondary school.	2014 – 2016
	Ensure that children with disabilities have equal access to education.	2016
	Expand existing programs to address the scope of the child labor problem.	2010 – 2016

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